/13 cont./

574 road in the evening, he immediately greets him, "bziala vahbeit" -- "it is good to see you!" Then he invites the traveler into his house; "Come in and rest, where are you going now? Spend the night in our house, and early in the morning go your way." If the traveler, be he an acquaintance or a stranger, accepts the invitation and puts up at the host's house, he receives a warm reception and is wonderfully well regaled. And if the traveler does not accept the invitation, he replies, "ubeikht" (grow rich, thank you) and continues on his way. The custom of hospitality protects the traveler even from blood-vengeance. Once he is someone's guest, no one has the right to touch him.

181 Along with his hospitality and generosity, the Abkhaz is
● 888 also courteous, polite, and respectful, especially to older persons. Here are a few examples.

515 Before taking any food the Abkhaz usually wash their hands.
576 But the washing is performed in order of seniority, the ablution
[264] of the hands beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest of those attending the banquet. The same order is observed in drinking wine. But on such occasions the oldest person does not lag behind either. In the beginning he renounces his right of priority and invites the person next in rank to drink wine or to wash his hands first. This is required by the custom of courtesy and politeness. But, of course, the younger person flatly refuses the honor offered him. Finally, after many mutual compliments and words of persuasion, the first one (the oldest) accepts the invitation after all. Then the same ceremony is gone through between the second and the third, the third and the fourth, and so on, down to the youngest person attending. Furthermore, while the oldest persons are washing their hands, the younger ones are obliged to remain standing. Here again there is ceremony, exhortations for them to sit down, but if those who are urged to do so ignore these exhortations and continue to stand, then the older person considers it improper to
576 wash his hands sitting down, and he also stands up. The question of which of two persons shall first cross the threshold and

/17 cont./

342 [585] newly-married couples. The poor sometimes have only one small house.

262 The ordinary daily food of the Abkhaz consists of cheese, corn bread, ghomi, and sour milk. The ghomi is prepared with cheese (aelagzh), or with milk and cheese (achamukhkua). In winter the Abkhaz contents himself with cooked meat; goat's meat is preferred. Doing without wine is no problem to him as long as there is sour milk. The Abkhaz hates crawfish; formerly he also disliked fish, but is now gradually becoming accustomed to eating it; there are also certain vegetables that are not eaten, [263] but the Abhaz likes food that is spiced with bitter herbs and pepper, etc. For occasions of prayer cone-shaped loaves of bread are baked, which are later boiled, in water during Lent and at other times in milk. These loaves are called arvazha.

592 The rights of seniority are strictly observed in the Abkhaz family. All the members of the household obey their pater familias (avn aihab). In the family everything is done according to his orders and wishes; only in matters concerning women does the oldest woman in the family (avn eihab aphs) take command. The younger members always act according to the instructions of the older ones, but if a younger member of the family is cleverer or more experienced than one of superior age, then for all practical purposes things are arranged according to his wishes and instructions.

The oldest (man and woman) in the home perform all re- [888] ligious rites and prayers. The oldest man also performs all [593] family rites. Sons take care of their aged parents with great love; they usually do not leave the parental home as long as the parents are alive. If a separation takes place, the parents are 428 given half of the entire property. In case the property is divided [592] between a mother and her sons, the mother gets, in addition to her dowry, a share equal to that of each of her sons; she then /18/ settles with one of her sons, as she sees fit. The oldest brother is alloted a special share for his seniority (aihabshakhu). If there are many cattle, this special share will consist of one head of each kind of cattle; if there is not much, then only one, the best, is given. The youngest brother also gets a special share